

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough review of the present application, and respectfully request reconsideration in light of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter is also noted with appreciation.

Claims 1-18 and 21-32 are pending in the application. Claims 19-20 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-18 and 21-30 have been amended to better define the claimed invention. New claims 31-32 including the indicated allowable subject matter of original claims 2 and 4, respectively, have been added to provide Applicants with the scope of protection to which they are believed entitled. The specification has been revised to be consistent with the drawings and to include the changes kindly suggested by the Examiner in the Office Action. The Abstract has been placed in US compliant form. No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments.

The objection to the drawing is moot as the feature being objected to, i.e., "circular table top," has been cancelled.

The objections to the specification and claims, as well as the *35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph* rejection are believed overcome in view of the above amendments.

The *35 U.S.C. 102(b)* rejection of claims 1, 3, 5, 10-12, 21, 23 and 30 as being anticipated by *FR 738 868* is traversed, since the reference does not disclose all features recited in claim 1.

In particular and contrary to the Examiner's allegation, the *FR '868* reference does not disclose the claimed transverse support members, which are prevented from displacing into a collapsed position as long as at least one of the respective longitudinal members is in the erect position. This limitation finds support in the disclosed snapping engagement between adjacent ends of the respective transverse and longitudinal support members as well as between adjacent ends of the longitudinal support members and the central support member. *See, e.g., the specification at page 7, lines 14-30 and Figs. 3C and 4B.*

It is acknowledged that the transverse and the longitudinal support members 8 of the *FR* '868 reference are connected to the panels 1, 2, 3 and 4 by hinges 7 to be pivotable from a collapsed position (FIG. 1) to an erect position (FIG. 2). However, the *FR* '868 reference does not disclose any arrangement which prevent the support members, when they are in the erect position, from collapsing when any of the longitudinal support members is erect. As best seen in FIG. 1 of the *FR* '868 reference and Attachment A attached to the Office Action, the longitudinal support member is entirely placed outside the paths along which the transverse support members move between the erect and collapsed positions. This means, the transverse support members of the *FR* '868 reference are allowed to collapse any time, regardless of whether the longitudinal support member is in the erect position or not.

In addition, the *FR* '868 reference as applied by the Examiner fails to teach or disclose a pair of longitudinal support members under each of the table top half-sections, as recited in claim 1. As best seen in FIG. 1 of the *FR* '868 reference and Attachment A attached to the Office Action, there is only one longitudinal support member (marked by the Examiner) for each of the half-sections.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is not anticipated by the *FR* '868 reference. The *FR* '868 reference as well as the teaching references also fail to render claim 1 obvious, lacking an adequate suggestion or motivation to modify the references. Claim 1 is thus patentable over the applied art of record.

Claims 2-18 and 21-30 depend from claim 1, and are considered patentable at least for the reasons advanced with respect to amended claim 1. The dependent claims are also patentable on their own merits since these claims recite other features of the invention neither disclosed, taught nor suggested by the applied art.

For example, as to claims 15 and 22, the Examiner's rejection of claims 15 and 22 as being obvious over the '*FR* '868 reference in view of U.S. Patent No. 1,662,121 to *Moncrieff* is further traversed for the following reasons. First, the references are not combinable, since *Moncrieff* does not teach a collapsible table; the reference instead teaches a dismountable table. Second, contrary to the Examiner's allegation, *Moncrieff* does not disclose the claimed snap-fit engagement. Applicants note that the openings 10 shown in Fig. 2 of *Moncrieff* "correspond in size, position and shape to register with and fit over the protruding tongues 6." See also *Moncrieff* at column 1, lines 55, and

column 2, lines 1-2. These elements do not provide any snap fit connection, but merely ensure that the longitudinal side members 8 about the angle iron post 5. Thus, the applied references singly or in combination fail to teach or suggest all limitations of claims 15 and 22.

As to claims 16-17, the Examiner's rejection of claims 16-17 as being obvious over the '*FR '868* reference in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,551,100 to *Kindrick* is further traversed, because *Kindrick* is non-analogous art. It is sufficient to note that the most relevant reference, i.e., *FR '868*, relates to a collapsible table, while *Kindrick* concerns with a shower seat or bath bench. One skilled in the art would not have looked for a solution to a problem of the collapsible table art in a remote technical field of mechanical arrangements for seats.

The rejection of claim 20 is moot as claim 20 has been cancelled.

As to claims 25-27 and 19, the Examiner's obviousness rejections are further traversed for lacking adequate suggestion or motivations to combine the references. In particular, the Examiner has not specified with reasonable clarity whether (a) the references themselves or (b) the knowledge generally available in the art provide the suggestion or motivations being used in the rejections. Therefore, Applicants are not persuaded that a prima facie case of obviousness has been properly established.

New claims 31-32 include the indicated allowable subject matter of original claims 2 and 4, respectively, and are believed patentable over the art.

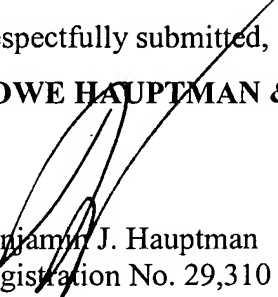
Each of the Examiner's rejections has been traversed/overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are now in condition for allowance. Early and favorable indication of allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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